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ABSTRACT

This study examined the need to better define and describe the concept of teacher leadership, especially from the point of view of the beginning teacher. It focused on teacher leadership as perceived by nine preservice and 3 relatively new inservice elementary teachers from a 5-year integrated Bachelor's/Master's teacher preparation program. Researchers collected data at the university and within the elementary schools via semi-structured interviews with student teachers, supervising teachers, administrators, teacher colleagues, deans, and college professors. They also conducted 20 observation sessions within the elementary and university classrooms and in professional meetings with colleagues. Overall, respondents believed that teacher leaders were fine classroom practitioners who were committed to the lives of their students; were engaged in curriculum development and change via their involvement in school and district level committees; and when necessary, took a stand, went against the grain, or challenged convention to ensure that the very best of themselves and their colleagues were being implemented for the good of schools and students. They felt that for teacher leadership to thrive, teachers had to work collaboratively with their principals and share decision making. (Contains 30 references.) (SM)

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EXPLORING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER PREPARATION

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ABSTRACT

The problem this qualitative study addressed is the need to define and describe the concept of teacher leadership. Results from a study of preservice and inservice elementary school teachers from a five-year, integrated undergraduate/graduate preservice program indicate that teacher leaders were perceived to be exemplary teachers who empower students while serving as role models by continuing their own education. Teacher leaders were thought to participate in professional development activities such as mentoring new teachers and contributing to school and district-level committees. For teacher leadership to flourish, it was believed that teachers and principals need to function in a collegial capacity.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher empowerment remains a key to educational reform. Yet, as we begin the new millennium, the many practical difficulties faced by teachers throughout our country's history remain. A lack of substantial decision-making power in their profession (Andrew, 1974; Hallinger & Richardson, 1988) and an overwhelming feeling of being controlled and dominated (Apple, 1982; Irwin, 1996) are only a few of the many challenges that hamper teacher leadership. Teacher leadership is a concept that entails empowering classroom teachers, those directly involved in the educative process, to play a vital role in school reform. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) write, "Teachers who are leaders, lead within and beyond their classroom (and) influence others toward improved educational practice..." (p. 6). However, we believe that in order for teacher leadership to be promoted on a large scale, perceptions of this important concept must first be clarified.

THE PROMOTION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A PROBLEM

A review of the educational reform literature places emphasis on the importance of teacher leadership in serving our nation's schools. As far back as 1974, Andrew provided a model of the concept by stating, "Teacher leadership is not meant to refer to administrative or bureaucratic leadership; rather to a central role for teachers in promoting change which improves the quality of education" (p. 8). He offered three areas in which teachers might exert leadership and, hence, prove catalysts for change: (a) self-improvement, (b) improvement of colleagues, and (c) initiation of curriculum change. Andrew proposed that the teacher leader serve as a bridge between the school and university, as well as theory and practice. "The teacher leader is...a master teacher and

curriculum leader, devoting talents to stimulating planning and implementation of curricular change" (Andrew, 1974, p. 66).

More recently, in their study, Smylie and Denny (1990) explored how teacher leaders defined their roles. The teacher leaders viewed themselves primarily as advocates for fellow teachers within their buildings. They defined leadership from within the teaching ranks using such words and phrases as "facilitator," "helper," "catalyst for improvement," "emotional support," and "source of knowledge" were accurate descriptors of their roles. The researchers also identified approximately three dozen leadership activities in which teacher leaders had engaged. Some of these activities were attending program-related meetings, engaging in building-level decision making, developing district-level curricular programs, developing curricular/instructional material, planning building-level staff development activities, and promoting implementation of district-level programs. However, uncertainties were found regarding "...whether their fellow teachers understood their leadership roles and what those teachers and their principals expected of them in those roles" (p. 246).

One of the few in-depth descriptive studies of teacher leaders in practice remains Wasley's (1991) study of three teacher leaders from different states in the US. Her guiding research question was, "What is the nature of teacher leadership as it currently exists in schools today?" Besides conducting interviews with the three teacher leaders, Wasley conducted interviews with three to four colleagues of each participant to uncover their conceptions of the role teacher leader. In addition, Wasley observed each teacher leader in the classroom and attended relevant meetings with her participants. She also visited several classrooms of teachers who were to be the recipients of the teacher leaders'

assistance.

Similar to Smylie and Denny (1990), Wasley (1991) found that one of the major issues was in the perception of the role of teacher leader. She reported that upon asking teachers and administrators to define the term, she received a great deal of confusion and, at best, vague answers. She wrote, "Everyone in the educational community had a different interpretation of the teacher leader's role, the purpose, and how the time allocated should be spent" (p. 138). Wasley noted that the teacher leaders themselves found it difficult to define their roles "...because it has never been possible and/or meaningful to spend time talking about it" (p. 147).

Wasley (1991) concluded her study by noting, "I am both heartened by the potential for teacher leadership, and respectful of the complexity involved in any attempt to create stronger leadership roles for teachers" (p. 168). Despite this positive sentiment, we believe that before specific recommendations can be made with regard to how best to foster teacher leadership in practice, a major problem is in how teacher leadership is actually defined. Considering the massive turnover in practicing teachers expected in the next few years, we examined this issue from the perspective of tomorrow's leaders, today's beginning teachers.

METHODOLOGY

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The overall problem that we addressed in this qualitative study is the need to better define and describe the concept of teacher leadership, especially from the point of

view of the beginning teacher. We specifically examined teacher leadership as it was perceived by nine preservice and three relatively new inservice elementary school teachers from the five-year, Integrated Bachelor's/Master's Teacher Preparation Program in the School of Education at the University of Connecticut. The University of Connecticut's philosophical underpinning focuses on the development of teacher leaders. To this end, the program entails striving for strong relationships with public schools aligned with its philosophy (Professional Development Schools or PDSs), and fostering the concepts of inquiry and reflection (Norlander, Reagan, & Case, 1994). In the fifth/master's year, following the senior year student teaching experience, University of Connecticut students become interns and remain at the PDSs for 20 hours per week to develop and complete action research projects (Case, Norlander, & Reagan, 1993; Lonning & Spaulding, 1998; Norlander, Case, Reagan, Campbell, & Strauch, 1997). Norlander, et al. (1994) write, "...the research projects are intended to contribute not only to the individual student's education, but also to the renewal and improvement of the setting which the intern is working" (p. 9). It is also in the fifth year when students are required to enroll in an educational leadership course in which the concept of the teacher leader is introduced as a catalyst for positive change in schools.

This course, "Teacher Leadership and Organizations," is a three-credit, graduate level course that is taken in either semester of a student's fifth and final year in the program. The course is offered through the Department of Educational Leadership, not through the Department of Curriculum & Instruction where most of the teacher education courses are offered. The leadership course primarily focuses on the dynamics of the culture and climate of schools. Discussions revolve around the idea of teachers serving as

influential and ethical leaders in the creation of effective learning environments within schools. As the syllabus of this course states, "As the work of the teacher and school becomes more complex, it is increasingly important that teachers understand their role in establishing norms related to school culture and professional relationships and their role as change agent." Leadership roles that are portrayed in such films as Lean on Me and The Bridge on the River Kwai are also discussed within the context of teacher leadership. Outside speakers from teacher unions and other educational settings are invited to discuss policy issues and professional ethics.

RESEARCH QUESTION

> What is teacher leadership as it is perceived by preservice and inservice elementary school teachers from a five-year teacher education program, and university and public school faculty members and administrators?

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this qualitative study, 12 participants were purposefully sampled (Patton, 1990). Nine preservice elementary school teachers (three juniors, three seniors, and three fifth/master's students) enrolled in the five-year, integrated bachelor's/master's program at University of Connecticut and three inservice elementary school teachers, teaching in grades K-6, who have graduated from University of Connecticut within the past 3-5 years, made up the individual cases in this study. For four months, we spent an average of three days per week collecting data at either University of Connecticut or in elementary schools. These nine elementary schools were sites in which the three inservice teachers

were teaching and all but the junior year preservice teachers were conducting their field placements.

Thirty-nine in-depth, semi-structured interviews were designed and conducted. These interviews included one with each of the 12 participants. In addition, for all the juniors, one other individual was interviewed, and for each of the remaining nine participants two other individuals were interviewed as described following. The three juniors' seminar leader was interviewed, each senior's and fifth/master's student's professor and supervising teacher were interviewed, and each inservice teacher's immediate administrator and a teacher colleague were interviewed. Furthermore, three deans and five additional professors from University of Connecticut's School of Education were interviewed. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour and all were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim following each meeting. Table 1 provides an illustration of the number and nature of each of the 12 participant's interviews and observations.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE.]

In addition, 20 observation sessions were conducted in elementary school and/or university classrooms. Each inservice teacher was observed participating in classroom teaching, and all were observed in professional meetings with colleagues. Each senior and fifth/master's student was observed participating in field placements and collegial seminars. Since University of Connecticut juniors are not required to formally teach in a field placement, they were not observed. In addition, the teacher leadership course in which University of Connecticut fifth/master's students were required to enroll was

observed twice. Each observation lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour and one-half. In the case of the teacher leadership course, both observations lasted 2 and one-half hours. Furthermore, we collected and analyzed documents including university program guides and course syllabi.

Content analysis of transcripts, field notes, and documents was a two step process of coding and interpretation. First, all passages were coded using codes that corresponded to the research question. Once specified, these passages were interpreted to develop a snapshot of the participants' perceptions at the time of the study. The reliability of this coding and interpretation was checked by comparing codes and subsequent interpretation by two different coders (Bishop & Anderson, 1990). Any discrepancies in the coding or interpretation was discussed until an agreement was reached.

RESULTS

The research question that guided this study addressed perceptions of the concept of teacher leadership. Multiple perceptions emerged from data analysis, and were organized into four broad categories: "Professional Development," "Great Teaching," "Taking a Stand," and "Teacher Leader vs. Principal." Taken as a whole, these categories provide a well-rounded picture of teacher leadership as it was perceived by the participants, as well as by school and university faculty members and administrators (see Table 2).

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE.]

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"Teacher leadership means that teachers are critical participants in their schools, that they're not afraid to roll up their sleeves and be involved in more than just their classrooms," said one teacher educator. The majority of the interviewees discussed the teacher leader as one who has "big picture concerns" and serves outside the classroom to benefit the entire life of the school. One principal stated, "A teacher leader is someone who can move things along for the good of the grade-level and for the good of the school." Most of the interviewees also believed that by parlaying experience, wisdom, and collegiality outside the classroom, the teacher leader's impact on the professional development of others and themselves can be far reaching. His or her efforts ultimately were thought to benefit students. "A teacher leader is someone who can take his or her qualities, and share them with other teachers for the good of the students," explained an inservice teacher.

Many interviewees emphasized the fact that serving outside the classroom is not an easy task. Teachers are under tremendous strain and very often have little time to devote to this practice. An inservice teacher commented, "Getting ready to begin a family, I'm not in a position to devote weekends to attend or present at workshops." This was not an uncommon sentiment. A principal explained, "There are times in every teacher's life when they [sic] won't be able to devote that kind of time. It could be because of a new baby or a sick family member." However, many of those interviewed expressed the idea that not every teacher must do everything. Some teachers discussed the idea of "taking turns" in leadership positions.

In this study, interviewees described ways in which teacher leaders could "share

leadership" to serve the professional development of their schools, colleagues, and themselves, without taking necessary time away from their students. Two significant ways were addressed through which teacher leaders could share leadership: mentoring new teachers and committee membership.

Mentoring New Teachers

The aspect of teacher leadership most identified was serving as mentor and role model for the development of new teachers. Many inservice and preservice teachers spoke of being mentored by teacher leaders who modeled exemplary practice. A fifth year student spoke of his supervising teacher as "an inspirational teacher in all respects of the word." A senior identified particular University of Connecticut professors as teacher leaders because they "practiced what they preached." Some inservice teachers considered themselves teacher leaders because they assisted in the practice of neophyte teachers. A supervising teacher said, "I have all these notes from brand new teachers in other schools in the district wanting to come to my classroom to visit and observe." Although one inservice teacher had only taught second grade for three years, she was able to mentor new teachers at that grade level. Her colleague explained, "Basically, I followed Karen's lead for a whole year ... She was my mentor for my entire first year..." Through working with both preservice and beginning inservice teachers, teacher leaders play a major role in facilitating the development of quality classroom practitioners.

Committee Membership

"Teachers are a tremendous resource that very often go untapped," said a

supervising teacher. In this study, a major characteristic of the role of teacher leader that emerged was serving as resources on school and district-wide committees. The majority of the interviewees believed that similar to assisting new teachers, the teacher leader is one who shares his or her passion and expertise to benefit the school, the district, other teachers, and his or her own professional development. One principal commented,

> Teacher leaders are those who participate in the improvement of their profession. Like doctors and lawyers, we're professionals. If we don't continue to grow, experiment, and be willing to risk knowing something different, learning something different, our professionalism becomes stagnant.

In addition, interviewees expressed the idea that while not always thought of as the one "in charge" of committees and other professional development endeavors, the teacher leader is the one willing to take part and "have a stake" in the improvement of the teaching profession. A supervising teacher explained, "I think the way to (professional development involvement), is to assess what you're good at and identify places where you would like to see change and then go from there." For example, a PDS in which a senior was placed, was organized into "cadres." In this school, teachers assessed issues they would like to address during the school year, and developed clusters of teachers to focus on those areas. Those teachers interested in improving student motivation, developed a "motivation cadre," and those teachers who were interested in addressing home/school relations, developed a "home/school cadre." In the instance of one inservice teacher, her principal had asked her to be on a curriculum committee "because she has such an ability for input and insight into curriculum."

In this study, teacher leaders seemed to have been able to work on the

improvement of specific areas in which they would like to see change and/or have a particular expertise. Most of the interviewees addressed the fact that the first step which must be taken is on the part of the teachers themselves. An appropriate analogy of teachers being proactive was offered by an inservice teacher: "Before you put the fish in the water, the fish need to have a say, but not just a say. The leadership must come from within the water."

GREAT TEACHING

A significant characteristic of teacher leadership emerging from this study was the demonstration of exemplary skills and techniques in the classroom. As the instructor of the University of Connecticut teacher leadership course commented, "A teacher leader can be a person who exercises great judgment in the classroom, makes great calls for kids, and whose kids really succeed." In addition, it was expressed by the majority of preservice and inservice teachers, professors, and administrators that in order for teacher leaders to serve outside the classroom, especially in gaining allies among colleagues, they must be outstanding teachers. A common sentiment shared by interviewees was articulated by one supervising teacher: "Teacher leaders need to be good teachers because I don't know who'd be following them if they weren't." It was thought that teachers must not only know their craft but be personally invested in it. Another supervising teacher discussed the teacher's job as that of a "spiritually developed" vocation, and said, "Teacher leaders have a very strong sense of meaning with their jobs. It's not just a job. If they weren't being paid for it, they'd consider volunteering for it on some level." Two significant concepts were discussed through which great teaching can be measured:

continuing education and empowering students.

Continuing Education

A significant way discussed through which teacher leaders could become great teachers is via continuing their education. Some interviewees mentioned that a great many teachers simply halt their education once they have gained the necessary degrees and certification allowing them to teach. However, a teacher leader was believed to be one who is consistently striving to learn more about his or her craft. A veteran supervising teacher who considered herself a teacher leader said,

> I just finished my sixth-year degree, and I'm still not done. Great teachers need to maintain their education. You need to know what's going on in your field, and what's going on at the state level and national level. You need to maintain standards for yourself as well as for your students. The teaching profession has so much to it, and we need competence in all the different areas.

It was also mentioned that great teaching entails being aware of current research and practice in the teaching field. A University of Connecticut administrator commented, "Teacher leadership means having the research base and the practical base to know what you're doing is both practically and theoretically justifiable." In this way, the teacher leader was thought to possess the awareness and skills to, as a University of Connecticut professor stated, "be able to play a part in educational policy discussions and debates."

Empowering Students

Another mark of a great teacher was the idea of empowering students, assisting

them to "take control of their own learning." Most interviewees agreed that a way in which great teachers can do this is through having consistently high expectations for students. An inservice teacher said, "Even if a child has heard his whole life that he's a great student, it's important to still tell him what else he can do." A fifth year student seemed to concur when she commented, "All kid's aren't going to learn at the same rate, they're not going to learn the same thing, but if you set expectations high enough, they will rise to them."

It was also discussed that to set high expectations for students, a safe and supportive learning environment must first be provided. A fifth year student explained,

> I think it's important to have a safe environment for students where they feel they can take risks and that they're going to be supported. It's very important as a teacher to support your students and have a very caring and positive environment.

In this study, most interviewees believed that in order to empower students, teachers must assist students to believe in themselves. "It's important to make students feel that they can be successful and that they are successful and what they think matters," expressed an inservice teacher. For example, a supervising teacher had developed and implemented a remedial reading program that not only focused on students' academic performance but also on their self-esteem. This teacher commented, "What difference does it make if we teach them to read and then they feel miserable about themselves for the rest of their lives? We want those kids to feel good, be emotionally healthy, as well as being able to read."

TAKING A STAND

"I think of a teacher leader as someone willing to fly in the face of the system, to go against the norm," commented a junior. A major aspect of the role of teacher leader identified by many interviewees was described in a number of ways: "taking a stand," "going against the grain," "standing up for what you believe," and "challenging convention." It was discussed that teachers who serve as leaders outside the classroom must be willing and able to express that what they believe is correct for students, teachers, and the field of education. A University of Connecticut professor said, "Teacher leaders are people who ask why they're doing things, and won't accept the answer, 'Because this is what has always been done.'" A supervising teacher reflected on feeling it was her duty to speak up for what she believed,

> I don't go out of my way to make people upset and I actually try to be very diplomatic. But if it comes down to it and it's got to be said, it's got to be said. It does make me uncomfortable to have someone mad at me. I'll be the first to admit it. But, that's my job.

A senior who considered herself a political activist and "fan" of Eleanor Roosevelt, spoke of her desire to be a teacher leader because she would "never shut up" about values which she felt were worthwhile.

As many interviewees discussed, "top-down management" is prevalent in school districts, but teacher leaders are those who challenge this notion. A University of Connecticut professor spoke of one way in which a teacher leader can take a stand: "As a former board of education member, I think teachers should spend more time addressing

boards of education, educating boards of education." If, as several interviewees mentioned, teachers are the most informed individuals of the education process, they are the ones who should have a say in what affects them and their students. Although two supervising teachers discussed the fact that not all teachers are willing and/or able to "go against the grain," they could still be considered great teachers in the classroom. However, the majority of interviewees in this study spoke of teacher leaders as those who are not willing to simply close their classroom doors and pay no heed to decisions mandated "from above."

TEACHER LEADER VS. PRINCIPAL

Many interviewees in this study addressed the fact that the collegial relationship between teacher leaders and their principals has the potential to act as either facilitator for or hindrance to teacher leadership. While some of the interviewees discussed the role of the principal in its traditional incarnation (i.e., part of the political hierarchy of top-down management), the majority of the interviewees spoke of the importance of teacher leaders and principals to work as partners who share the same goals. Of those who expressed the traditional view, most were inservice and preservice teachers. Several interviewees explained that principals have greater responsibility for the outcomes of the schools. An inservice teacher stated, "The principal really has to worry about what central office wants, test scores, discipline, and issues of hiring and firing. A teacher really doesn't have to worry about that stuff." Furthermore, it was believed that because of his or her "political" position, a principal is more apt to compromise personal values. An inservice teacher explained, "I see a lot of administrators step down from what they believe in

because there's a lot of strain on them from the community."

Several interviewees, however, discussed the importance of principals acting in accord with teacher leaders. "Ultimately, teachers answer to (the principal), but they need to have a trusting relationship so they can work on goals together," said a fifth year student. One principal mentioned, "I don't think there's much difference between the two. I consider myself a teacher leader. I think the most important function that I have is the growth and development of my teachers." Similarly, another principal explained, "A good principal says, 'These teachers don't work for me, I work for them.' And that's what I'm here for, to help them be successful because if they aren't successful, the kids aren't going to learn." Therefore, as the majority of the interviewees expressed, those principals who view themselves as supporters of the work of teachers, can serve as facilitators to teacher leadership. However, if principals continually allow themselves to act in hierarchical and bureaucratic ways, and not consider the views and ideas of teachers, they can become a major hindrance to the manifestation of teacher leadership.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study addressed the concept of teacher leadership as it was perceived by preservice and inservice elementary school teachers from a five-year teacher education program, as well as university and public school faculty members and administrators. Regarding perceptions of teacher leadership, the results of this qualitative study are very much in accord with current literature, and begin to provide some "depth" to this notion. In this study, teacher leaders were purported to be fine classroom practitioners (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Cuban, 1988) who are committed to the lives of their students

(Haberman, 1994; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996). Teacher leaders were also perceived to engage in curriculum development and change via their involvement in school and district-level committees (Andrew, 1974; Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Haberman, 1994; Lieberman, 1988; Smylie & Denny, 1990). Furthermore, when necessary, teacher leaders need to "take a stand," "go against the grain," or "challenge convention" to insure that the very best of themselves and their colleagues are being implemented for the good of their school and their students (Gardner, 1990; Irwin, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1992). This could mean implementing a remedial program that is unpopular with colleagues but serves children, or "educating" boards of education on actual occurrences in the classroom.

A particularly significant finding in this study was that in order for teacher leadership to thrive, it is imperative that teachers work collaboratively with their principals. It was revealed that to facilitate true teacher leadership, teachers and principals must work in conjunction and share decision-making. Much of what has been written on the rethinking of the principalship is in accord with this concept.

Traditionally, the individual serving in a formal school administrative position, such as the principal, has been viewed as the primary authority and decision-maker (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). Some believe this role undermines teaching and learning (Glickman, 1993; Lambert, Collay, Dietz, Kent, & Richert, 1996; Sacken, 1994). "People with formal authority and control over the professional lives of others make them do whatever is deemed best. Individuals and group members may be asked for their input, ... but final decisions clearly come from power over subordinates" (Glickman, 1993, p. 83). Lambert, et al. (1996) write, "Such relationships are characterized by permission asking and granting; punitive responses for slight transgression; ... one-way evaluation,

communication, and feedback; and praise or other extrinsic reward" (p. 3). "Top-down" decision making has shown little effect on those in subordinate roles (Hallinger & Richardson, 1988). The Holmes Group (1990) writes, "Talking about teachers and administrators as separate parties is self-destructive" (p. 83). The traditional model of school leadership is strictly at odds with advocates of teacher leadership. Nevertheless, we believe there is enough to report that this ingrained view of administration may now be shifting.

Ackerman, Donaldson, and van der Bogert (1996) report that principals "...who embrace open inquiry, the sharing of problems and solutions, and collective responsibility will foster creativity, resourcefulness, and collaboration in the work of staff and the learning of children" (p. 3). Sergiovanni (1994) writes,

> What do principals do in schools that are becoming communities of leaders? Many things. They preach and teach, they encourage, they help, and sometimes they even yell and tell. But mostly they serve. They come to learn that the challenge of leadership in communities does not go away, it merely takes different forms... (p. 189)

The principal who serves in a community of leaders proves to be a colleague and fellow decision-maker with teachers. Citing Rost (1991), Ackerman, et al. (1996) write, "...it is important for principals and teachers themselves to learn to collaborate in order to create shared leadership in their schools. The actions of one individual alone, principal or teacher, cannot determine the leadership model for a school" (p. 135). Wasley (1992) asserts that teacher leaders do not function in a vacuum, and that they must work in accord with other school-based partners, including principals. "Teachers cannot assume

important leadership roles without the support of these partners, nor can they make necessary changes if they do not have the support of these partners over time" (Wasley, 1992, p. 235). Most recently, as Barth (2001) reminds us, "If ever was a time when the principal could ride in alone on a white horse, like John Wayne or Joan of Arc, and save a troubled school, those days are certainly over. I know of no administrator who doesn't need help in fulfilling his or her job description" (p. 445).

Thus, the rethinking of the role of the principal within a community of leaders must be realized if any of the emerging issues of educational reform, especially teacher leadership, are to ever come to fruition. As discussed above, the University of Connecticut's teacher education program, offered through its Department of Curriculum and Instruction, requires its fifth/master's students to enroll in the course "Teacher Leadership and Organizations." Considering this course is offered through the university's Department of Educational Leadership and taught by that department's faculty, we believe this is a step in the right direction. This is a good example of how two vital departments who traditionally enjoy little collegiality can work together to influence leadership in schools. If collaborative decision-making at the school level is to be practically implemented, teacher education and principal preparation must be at the forefront.

We believe there is a tremendous amount of untapped potential in this "cross-pollination" between departments of educational leadership and departments of teacher education. Through this relationship, both beginning teachers and beginning principals can be made aware of the importance of sharing leadership to foster what is best for students. Courses can be required for new teachers and principals within both

departments that will help them become aware of the importance of collaborative decision-making and what it actually looks like in practice. Ethics in leadership, case studies in various leadership models, and practical issues faced by the teacher and principal are only a smattering of the concepts that can be explored through a collegial relationship between the two departments. If these university departments begin to grapple with how they can work together to produce the most well-informed and collaborative teachers and administrators, inservice professionals will more likely implement the empowerment of teachers, those directly involved in the educative process.

It is clear that further research could greatly contribute to our understanding of teacher leadership, as well as facilitate the development of teacher leaders for service in our nation's schools. Additional studies into perceptions of the concept can further assist in determining how best to create a more widely-accepted definition of teacher leadership, and what it means for one to serve as a teacher leader. More in-depth descriptive studies on teacher leadership are needed, especially regarding how the multiple perceptions of teacher leadership are manifested in practice, both inside and outside the classroom. Future inquires could also focus on the role the principleship plays in facilitating teaching leadership at the school level. Furthermore, it is imperative that future studies focus on the major impact that departments of teacher education and educational leadership, working in conjunction, can have on facilitating collaborative decision-making and teacher leadership in practice. If studies such as these are undertaken, the potential to influence reform agendas in public schools, via encouraging future teacher leaders, can be far reaching.

The practice and promotion of teacher leadership appear to have the potential to significantly and positively impact educational reform, collaborative decision-making, and the empowerment of teachers. If true and lasting change is to take place in US public schools, studies such as this qualitative inquiry have the potential to not only further our understanding of the nature of teacher leadership, but also assist in facilitating positive change for our nation's teachers, administrators, and students.

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Table 1
Number and Nature of Participant's Interviews and Observations

Participants	Interviews	Observations
3 Inservice Teachers	1 with each participant. 1 with each participant's principal. 1 with a colleague of each participant.	1 of each participant in classroom teaching. 1 of each participant in a staff meeting.
3 Fifth/Master's & 3 Seniors	1 with each participant. 1 with a professor of each participant. 1 with each participant's supervising teacher.	1 of each participant in classroom teaching. 1 of each participant in a university seminar.
3 Juniors	1 with each participant. 1 with one professor of all participants.	

Table 2
Patterns in the Perceptions of Teacher Leadership

Categories	Subcategories
Professional Development	(a) Mentoring New Teachers (b) Committee Membership
Great Teaching	(a) Continuing Education (b) Empowering Students
Taking a Stand	
Teacher Leader vs. Principal	